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THE PORTUGUESE ELEMENT IN NEW ENGLAND.

AMONG the foreign elements of Romanic speech settled in the United States, the Portuguese is the one which so far seems to have almost entirely escaped the notice of the public. Every one knows of the existence of large numbers of Canadians in New England, of the French settlements in Louisiana, of the Spanish in Texas, New Mexico, and California, of the Italians in New Orleans and in Eastern cities like Boston and New York ; but only few seem to realize the fact that every year from fifteen hundred to two thousand Portuguese men and women are landed in Boston and New Bedford, and that there is a large colony of them in California, supporting numerous churches, besides a literary review and a weekly journal ; that there is a Portuguese settlement in Erie, Pa., also maintaining a weekly paper ; and, especially, that in New England alone we have not less than seven Portuguese colonies, numbering at present more than twenty thousand. Of those seven colonies a large one is in Providence, R. I., while the other six belong to the State of Massachusetts. Naming the latter in the order of their numerical strength and importance, they are the following :— New Bedford, Boston (including Cambridge), Taunton, Fall River, Provincetown, and Gloucester. For the most part these Portuguese colonists are natives of the Azores, chiefly from the islands of Fayal, Pico, St. George, and Flores ; only few are from Madeira, and still smaller is the number of colored Portuguese from the Cape Verde islands.

What, it is natural to ask, brought about the immigration of these islanders into New England ? And when did it begin ? No official records exist to answer these questions, but from the statements of some of the oldest colonists it may be inferred with sufficient certainty that the first Portuguese arrived in New England some sixty or more years ago as sailors on the whaling vessels sent out from New Bedford, then the most important whaling port of the East. Hence it is that New Bedford can boast of the oldest as well as the largest Azorian colony in the New England States. Later, it was the report of the liberties and opportunities offered in America to industrious people that induced the over-taxed and poverty-stricken islanders to try their fortunes here, and set in motion that wave of emigration to the United States which is still on the increase. The young man thus escapes the military service which means to him an exile of many years in the barracks of continental Portugal, with the gloomy prospect of at the end returning home without a penny to support him in the autumn of his life. The young maiden leaves

her native village in the expectation of better pay for her needle and straw work, for the delicate quality of which the Azorian women have long been famous. Most of them, no doubt, consider the absence from their native land as an exile, and intend returning as soon as they shall have saved up their "little pile;" but, having once enjoyed the benefits of the free institutions and the many opportunities of this country, and become more or less imbued with the spirit of American life, they generally conclude to make the United States their permanent home.

The Portuguese colony in New Bedford being the oldest as well as the largest and most prosperous in the State, it may, for the sake of brevity, serve us for illustrating the material and intellectual condition of the whole Portuguese element in New England. The Azorians occupy almost the entire southern section of the city of New Bedford, and a goodly part of the western section. The Portuguese quarter is popularly known as "Fayal." According to the register of their church, they number now over seven thousand in the city itself, while some two hundred live in the neighboring country on farms partly owned by themselves. There are also Portuguese residents in the adjacent towns of Dartmouth, Acushnet, and Fairhaven. The large majority of them, belonging chiefly to the illiterate class, are employed in our numerous cotton-mills and other factories, in the lumber-yards, and in the service of the city street department. The more intelligent of the young men, unwilling to submit to the drudgery of the work in the mills, choose hairdressing as their profession. This is done even by most of those who at home enjoyed the advantages of a college course. Unable to speak English, they find it almost impossible in this country to turn to profitable account what little information of practical value they may have acquired in a Portuguese college, mediæval as this latter still is in its aims and methods of instruction. But comparatively low as their present position is, they constitute the most wide-awake element of the colony. It is among the barbers that we must generally look for the leading members of the social and other societies of our colonies, such as the Club Social Lusitano and the Sociedade Dramatica of New Bedford, and the Club Social Dom Luis I. of Boston. Many of the Portuguese settlers are engaged in fishing, as especially the colonies of Provincetown and Gloucester. The women earn their living either in the mills or as servant-girls and seamstresses. All, both men and women, are looked upon by the community as a valuable accession to the laboring population. They are industrious, thrifty, honest, and as a rule far more refined in their sentiments and manners than the Canadians. Some of the older residents among them have acquired considerable wealth and own handsome

houses. The New Bedford colony supports a substantial church in which the Roman Catholic service is conducted in Portuguese by three priests, one of whom is also in charge of the colony at Fall River. They have a charitable society which a few years ago erected a spacious building called "The Monte Pio Hall." It is in this building that the social life of the colony centres, where the celebrations of national holidays, balls, dramatic performances, and other entertainments take place. On such occasions, one cannot but admire the decorum and courteous demeanor observed by these people. Several of the other colonies, such as Boston and Taunton, have their own churches and social clubs, but it is New Bedford that has always given the initiative for any demonstration of national spirit. It is here that the Club Social Lusitano, on the 1st of December of every year, celebrates by a sumptuous banquet and a ball the liberation of Portugal from Spanish rule in 1640, a celebration to which delegates from the other New England colonies and the Portuguese consul in Boston are invited. It is in New Bedford, again, that some ten years ago a Portuguese weekly, called "O Luso-Americano," was published, which unfortunately, enjoyed only a very short existence. A similar enterprise was started a year ago, with the title, "O Novo Mundo" (The New World), and continues to be published.

But if the maintenance of a Portuguese church, the existence of clubs devoted to the observance of national festivals, and the cultivation of dramatic art may be considered as so many laudable signs of the loyalty of our colonists to their native land, it is none the less evident that they are undergoing a rapid process of assimilation to their new surroundings. The inexorable struggle for existence, to which they are subjected almost immediately upon their arrival here, the novelty of their occupations and their every-day life, the more or less intimate contact into which they are thrown with the far more numerous English-speaking population, with its practical, sober way of looking at things, — all these manifold influences unite in producing a marked change in their habits of speaking and thinking. Their new experiences suggest to them ideas which they had not been called upon to express in their mother-tongue, and they are forced to resort to the medium of the English language, by which alone they may hope to make themselves intelligible to all; their new surroundings fail to recall to their minds many of the traditions which had ever been associated with their former homes and haunts, and the freshness of these traditions gradually fades away. With them must needs disappear much of the native vocabulary which was embodied in them. In order, however, to appreciate Azorian speech and folk-lore, such as it survives in our midst, it will be necessary to inquire briefly into what it is and has been in its original home.

Whether the Azores were discovered in 1350 or a century later, and by whom, does not concern us here; suffice it to say that their occupation and colonization by the Portuguese began in 1436 and was practically accomplished in 1457. The speech of the Azorians, which divides itself into two main groups, one represented by St. Michael, the other by Fayal, reflects on the whole the middle and northern Portuguese of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and has suffered no perceptible influence either from the strong influx of the Flemish at the end of the fifteenth century or from other foreign, notably Moorish, elements. As all colonial speech, the Azorian is markedly archaic in its nature. And as the Azorians, in their isolated position, have preserved to us an older stage of the Portuguese language, so are their folk-songs the most ancient in the whole domain of Portuguese tradition, their origin dating back to that epoch of Portuguese history previous to the fifteenth century when poetic creation was still free from literary influences. These folk-songs naturally divide themselves into two main classes, one purely traditional, the other still in constant elaboration. The first class comprises the traditional, historical songs such as the ballad or romance, which, though portraying events and conditions which have long ago ceased to exist, are still piously repeated by the people. To illustrate: in one of these ballads, collected by Theophilo Braga on the island of St. Michael, we find the following passage:—

Hei — de atar o meu cabelo,
E virá — lo para traz,
Com uma fitinha vermelha
Que me deu o meu rapaz.

Roughly translated, this is: "I shall tie my hair, I shall gather it in a coil with a scarlet ribbon which my lover gave me." Here we have an allusion, frequent in these songs, to an ancient Portuguese law, according to which a single woman had to leave her hair flowing, a married woman was to wear it gathered in a knot in token of her conjugal submission, and a widow had to wear it covered under a cap.

It is highly significant for the venerable age of insular tradition, that on the Azores the historical songs are popularly called *Aravias*, a designation derived from *Arabe*, and still bearing witness to the fact that at the beginning of Portuguese nationality and when these ballads were in process of creation, the Arabic was the common vernacular of the Christian as well as of the Moor; the modern term *romance* marking the ascendancy of the neo-Latin idioms over their predecessor. To this may be added that in Fayal a kind of rhyme sung by the children is called *Aravenga*, a name which also testifies to the indebtedness of the ancient Portuguese to the Moor.

While many of these historical songs are still remembered by our Luso-Americans, they have ceased to be repeated by them, and are rapidly passing into oblivion.

In connection with this traditional, historical poetry must be mentioned a form of popular drama which has survived on the Azores. It is called *Mouriscada*, a term derived from *Mouro*, Moor. The representation consists in a dialogue and a sham battle between a Christian and a Moor, thus commemorating the reconquest of the Spanish peninsula from the Arabs. It is therefore a parallel to the Italian *teatro dei marionetti*, the well-known *opra* of the Sicilians, of the character of which there is so welcome an illustration in the *Teatro italiano* on North Street in Boston. It is greatly to be regretted that the *Mouriscada*, the popular theatre of the Azorians, should have been abandoned by our Azorian colonists, who, perhaps owing to the influence of their clergy, substitute for it on their excellently conducted stage in New Bedford, representations of a decidedly ecclesiastical and literary character.

The second class of popular poetry comprises those songs which, though in a large part also traditional, are still a living growth, echoing the actual life of the people by whom they are sung and embodying their loves and hates. It is the lyric poetry of the Portuguese people. As these love-songs belong to the few elements of insular tradition which, to a limited extent at least, still form a vital part in the social life of our American colonies, it may be well to give here a brief characterization of their nature.

The *cantiga d'amor*, or love-song, is an octosyllabic quatrain, the second and fourth lines of which rhyme. These quatrains have two distinct, antithetical parts, the first two lines containing as a rule a general idea, mostly drawn from nature or natural objects, whereas the last two lines express a particular idea, which stands in a certain antithesis to the first and applies to a given case. To illustrate:—

Já lá vae o sol abaixo,
Já não nasce onde nascia :
Já não dou as minhas fallas
A quem as dava algum dia.

There already the sun goes down,
The light of day has passed away :
Already I have ceased to speak
To whom I used to speak one day.

It will be noticed that the sentiment of this quatrain is as direct as it is simple. The antithesis or comparison between the two parts is clear. As the sun has gone down and is no longer seen, so has my love for you disappeared. The same is the case in the following instance:—

Candeia que não dá luz,
Não se espeta na parede :
O amor que não é firme,
Não se faz mais caso d'elle.

Candle which gives no light,
Never is hung from the wall :
Love which is not strong,
Never is noticed at all.

Often the comparison between the two parts is so perfect as to result in the complete absorption of the two terms in one, in an image. Such is the case in the following quatrain, in which the beloved, but inaccessible, woman is identified with the rose :—

Oh ! que linda rosa branca	Amor perfeito plantado
Aquella roseira tem !	Em qualquer parte, enverdece ;
De baixo ninguem lhe chega,	Só em peito d'homem vil
Lá cima não vae ninguem.	Amor perfeito fenece.

Here the two terms of comparison, the woman and the flower, blend in the word *rosa*, "rose," which is also a proper name. Quatrains like this one, wherein the comparison results in a sort of play on words, are numerous in the lyric poetry of the Spanish peninsula.

Even in quatrains in which the comparison is not perfectly clear, or where it has become quite obscured, the people invariably make a pause after the second line, showing that they are conscious of this formal distinction.

Satirical epigrams are also clothed in the metrical form of these love-songs. Only one instance of this kind may here be quoted, as illustrating very strikingly the conception in which the social position of woman is held by the people :—

Tambem o mar é casado,	Even the sea is married,
Tambem o mar tem mulher ;	Even the sea has a wife,
É casado com a areia,	He is married to the seashore,
Bate n'ella quando quer !	He beats it whene'er he likes. ¹

These songs are invariably accompanied by the *viola* or the *rabeca*, the favorite musical instruments of the islander, and are sung to the *Chama-Rita*, the most popular dance of the Azorians, which is still continued in our American colonies.

Equally rich as in folk-songs is the Azorian in folk-tales, many of which are yet to be collected, in nursery-rhymes, riddles, and superstitions. Here also the insular tradition has preserved much that is no longer remembered in Portugal. Of the popular tales, especially the so-called *contos da carouchinha*, and of nursery-rhymes, a goodly number may still be heard in the homes of our Azorian colonists, by the cradle or the fireside. Many of them, however, while they are still remembered for a time, are no longer repeated or observed. This is especially true of the superstitions, the number and intensity of which corresponds to the social as well as the intellectual condition of man. The greater the number of accidents to which men are exposed, the greater the dependence of their physical and moral welfare on agents which they cannot control, the greater, therefore, their fear of the unknown, the more intense will be their supersti-

¹ Cf. J. Leite de Vasconcellos, *Revista lusitana*, i. pp. 145, 176.

tious beliefs. Now, such is precisely the state of mind which plagues, famines, earthquakes, and similar causes have produced in the inhabitants of the Spanish peninsula and of the Azores. Hence the intensity and tenacity of superstition there, hence also its comparatively rapid disappearance here, where fear-inspiring natural phenomena are far less numerous, and where the social medium gives a much freer scope to the independent action of the individual. Still, it must not be supposed that superstitious belief and practice entirely cease to exist in our Portuguese colonies. They do not show themselves as openly as in their former home, but they may continue to play, in many a case, the determining part in the choice of a course of action. As a clue to the mental characteristics of our colonists, the superstitions surviving among them are entitled to a careful study.

Here follow a few specimens of Azorian folk-lore, collected among our Luso-Americans, in addition to the popular folk-songs which have been spoken of before.

There is a Portuguese proverb which says : “ *A fé é que nos salva, e não o pao da barca ;* ” in English : “ It is faith that saves us, not the wood of the ship.” This adage is the remainder of a popular story still current in the northern part of Italy, but unknown in Portugal. Two versions of it exist in Azorian traditions, of which the one from St. Michael, being the more perfect, will be given here : A maiden who was very ill and had lost all faith in the physicians, asked her lover, who was going to Jerusalem, to bring her from the holy city a piece of wood from the Saviour's cross, which she wished to take in wine, to see if it might cure her. The young man, having forgotten the request of his betrothed, cut a piece of wood from the ship in which he was returning home, to deceive the girl. Finding, after some time, that she had really taken it and was entirely cured, he exclaimed : “ It is faith that cures us, not the wood from the ship.”

The following game, unknown in Portugal, is quite popular among Azorian children, especially in Fayal. The words are almost all unintelligible, a fact which shows that they must be very old.

Minzin Minzol,
Cazim Cazol,
Por mor de ti,
José Manzol.
Cascaranhas,
Malaguetas,
Tringue lá fóra.

The game is played as follows : A girl holds out her apron with one hand and all her companions take hold of the edge of the apron

with two fingers of each hand. The girl thereupon recites the rhymes, one line for each hand, moving her finger from right to left.

The hand which is touched at the last line — *Tringue lá fóra* — must be withdrawn:

The Azorians are fond of lending zest and humor to their familiar conversation by jocular sayings in which their language is very rich. Thus to the question: What time is it? (*Que horas são?*) the playful reply is: *Horas de comer pão*; that is, Time to eat bread. To the favorite exclamation, *Paciência!* they answer: *Morreu o pae a Vicencia*. A narration interrupted by *então*, "then," is jocularly continued by the rhyme: *Sardinhas com pão*, "Sardines with bread," very much as in English a person saying, "Well, well!" is playfully asked: "How many wells make a river?"

To mention, finally, a characteristic gesture, the Azorian woman is accustomed to express her high appreciation of the value of an object, a present for instance, by taking the flap of her right ear between the forefinger and the thumb and exclaiming: *Está d'aquí!* that is to say: It is from here! This gesture plainly points back to the presence of the Moors in Portugal, whose women wore their most precious ornaments on their ears.

Having examined some of the aspects of Azorian folk-lore, such as it survives among us, it now remains for us briefly to consider the changes which the native speech of the Luso-American is undergoing. The influence of the new condition of things shows itself in the vocabulary, in the accent, and finally in the total loss of the ability of speaking Portuguese. The vocabulary shows a constantly increasing mixture with English elements, of which only a few instances can be mentioned here: *bordar*, "to board," for *hospedar*; *bordo*, "boarder," for *hospede*; *bins*, "beans," for *feijões*; *carpete*, "carpet," for *tapete*; *o bebe tá chulipe*, "the baby is asleep;" *estima*, "steamer," for *vapor*; *gairete*, "garret," for *airiques*; *notas*, "notice," for *noticia*; *offas*, "office," for *escritorio*; *salreis*, "celery," for *aipo*. Often it is the signification of a Portuguese word which is affected by the influence of the English. Thus our Luso-American speaks of *ter um frio*, "to have a cold," the proper Portuguese expression being: *estar constipado*. Or again he says: *Esta gravata olha bem*, "this cravat looks well," where *olhar*, "to behold," is a direct translation of the English "to look," meaning "to appear" as well as "to behold." Interesting is the word "*espalha-grace*," wherein one may recognize a popular attempt to interpret the English term "sparrow-grass," which in its turn is a popular etymology for "asparagus." There are cases in which the Portuguese idiom influences the English. Thus an English-speaking Azorian may be heard to say: "I had cabbages for dinner," the form *cabbages* being

due to the plural form of the corresponding Portuguese term, *couves*.

But not only the speech, nay the very names of our Azorian colonists are Anglicized, though it is the proper name which as a rule longest resists the destructive influence of foreign elements. This custom of Anglicizing their names dates back to the earliest times of these colonies when the Portuguese sailors commonly adopted the names of their American captains. To quote a few instances: the family name *Luiz* is disguised in the English *Lewis*, *Mauricio* in *Morris*, *Pereira* in *Perry*, *Rodriguez* in *Rodgers*. Still more. The Portuguese Christian name *Foachim*, quite common among the Azorians, is by the practical English mind interpreted as representing the two English names Joe King, an appellation readily adopted by our Portuguese colonists. That these latter should be so willing to abandon their real names will appear less strange when we consider that in their old as well as in their new home they were wont to be called by nicknames in preference to their first or family names. A few years ago an old man was living down on Hanover Street in Boston, whom every one knew by his nickname, "*Bate-canellas*," "Old Knock-knee," but hardly any one by his family name, *Carvalho*.

The most potent factor in Americanizing our Azorian colonists is the American school. The Azorians are keenly sensible of their want of education and seize with eagerness every opportunity to learn. Whereas the Canadians everywhere maintain their parochial schools, the Azorians, fervent Roman Catholics as they are, send their children to the American public school. In consequence of the education they here receive, they become estranged from their inherited traditions and their native speech, which most of them cease to speak; but much as this loss may be regretted, we must rejoice in the consideration that it is more than outweighed by what they gain in return. To the many sterling qualities, such as kindness of heart and delicacy of sentiment, which they already possess, our Luso-Americans now add a mind stored with useful information and better trained to cope with the many difficult problems of American life. Formerly obliged to earn their living by hard and confining manual labor, they now enter into a wider sphere of activity and usefulness and rise in the social scale. From whatever point of view we may consider our Portuguese colonists, they bid fair to become a highly respectable element of our population, more and more able to contribute to, and hence worthy to participate in the benefits of the material and intellectual progress of our commonwealth.

APPENDIX.

As the preceding article was only intended to be read as a short lecture, not to be published, it is not clothed in that rigid form which a treatise appearing in a scientific journal should invariably have. The author may therefore be pardoned for making here a few additions and corrections.

1. The lines beginning *Hei de atar o meu cabelo* are a lyric quatrain and should be mentioned in the section treating of lyric poetry.

2. For the remarks on the quatrain, cf. J. Leite de Vasconcellos' article on *cantigas populares* in the *Revista lusitana*, i. pp. 143-6 and 176.

Of two quatrains, no translation is given in the above paper. Here it is :—

O how white and sweet the rose	Perfect love, whene'er you plant it,
That blooms on yonder briar :	Sweetly blooms in every part :
From below it can't be reached,	Perfect love will fade away
Nor attained by climbing higher.	Only in the villain's heart.

In the second quatrain there is a play of words on the expression *amor perfeito*, "perfect love," which is used both in its ordinary literal sense and as a popular name of the flower which we call "pansy."

It need hardly be said that the English renderings given were solely meant to convey to the audience some idea of the form and feeling of these quatrains, but claim no other merit whatsoever.

3. In conclusion, we may here mention the following publications as bearing on the Folk-Lore of the Azores :—

THEOPHILO BRAGA : *Cantos populares do Archipelago açoriano*. Porto, 1869. — *O Povo portuguez nos seus costumes, crenças e tradições*. Lisboa, 1885. 2 vols. — *O Conde de Luz-bella. Fórmãs populares do theatro portuguez*. In : *Revista lusitana*, i. pp. 20-30. — *Ampliações do Romanceiro das ilhas dos Açores*. *Revista lusitana*, i. pp. 99-116. — *Cancioneiro popular das ilhas dos Açores*. *Revista lusitana*, ii. pp. 1-14.

F. ADOLPHO COELHO : *Revista d'Ethnologia e de Glottologia*. Lisboa, 1880-1881. 4 fasciculos.

FRANCISCO D'ARRUDA FURTADO : *Materiaes para o estudo anthropologico dos povos açorianos*. Ponta Delgada, 1884.

HENRY R. LANG : *Notas de philologia portuguesa*. In : *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, xiii. pp. 213-216. — *Tradições populares açorianas*. In : *Zeitschrift für rom. Philol.* xiii. pp. 217-224 and 416-430. — *Tradições populares açorianas*. In : *Revista lusitana*, ii. pp. 46-52. *Respigas do vocabulario açoriano*. *Ibid.* pp. 52-55.

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